

Message Text

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21

ACTION EA-10

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KS

SUBJECT: ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN

1. SINCE FALL OF INDOCHINA ROKG HAS BEGUN ANOTHER OF ITS PERIODIC ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGNS. PRESIDENT PAK MAY 2 TOLD GOVT OFFICIALS THAT HE CONSIDERED IRREGULARITIES IN GOVT ADMINISTRATION A MATTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY. HE SAID LEADERS SHOULD LEAD FRUGAL LIVES IN ORDER TO OVERCOME NATIONAL HARDSHIPS.

2. EMERGENCY MEASURE NINE, IN ADDITION TO ARTICLES DIRECTED AGAINST THOSE OPPOSING CONSTITUTION OR SPREADING "FALSEHOODS", CONTAINS PROVISION AGAINST CERTAIN TYPES OF CORRUPTION SUCH AS ILLEGAL FLIGHT OF PROPERTY FROM ROK, FRAUDULENT EMIGRATION, AND BRIBERY. SINCE MEASURE'S PROMULGATION MAY 13 ROKG HAS ANNOUNCED ARRESTS OF SEVERAL DOZEN PERSONS FOR ABOVE OFFENSES, BOTH UNDER PROVISIONS EMERGENCY MEASURE AND OF OTHER LAWS.

3. DURING JUNE 13 STATE COUNCIL MEETING REPORT WAS MADE THAT, IN MAY, DISCIPLINARY ACTION HAD BEEN TAKEN AGAINST 566 PUBLIC OFFICIALS. PRESS QUOTED PRESIDENT

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PAK AS SAYING IRREGULARITIES OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS WILL

BE ROOTED OUT.

4. RECENTLY GOVERNMENT HAS ANNOUNCED SPATE OF ARRESTS OF POLICE FOR EXTORITION OF PICKPOCKETS AND OF TAX OFFICIALS FOR BRIBERY. PRESS HAS CONCENTRATED ON ARRESTS OF SEVERAL INDUSTRIALISTS FOR ILLEGAL FLIGHT OF PROPERTY. MOST SENSATIONAL CASE IS THAT OF PAK TONG-MYONG, SON OF EVANGELIST/BUSINESSMAN PAK TAE-SON, ARRESTED FOR DIVERTING \$265,000 TO US WHERE HE ALLEGEDLY SPENT MOST OF IT IN PLAYBOY CLUBS.

5. PRESS ACKNOWLEDGES NEED FOR STRONG MEASURES AGAINST CORRUPTION. HOWEVER, EVEN UNDER RESTRAINTS EMERGENCY MEASURE NINE TONGA ILBO NOTES THAT "A WHIMSICAL PURGE OF CORRUPT OFFICIALS IS OF NO HELP IN ESTABLISHING STRICT DISCIPLINE OF OFFICIALDOM, AS WE SAW IN PURGE AFTER THE EMERGENCY MEASURES EARLY LAST YEAR." PRIVATELY EMBASSY CONTACTS REMAIN SKEPTICAL THAT PRESENT CAMPAIGN WILL DIFFER FROM THOSE OF PAST IN WHICH MEASURES WERE FOR MOST PART SYMBOLIC.

6. COMMENT: THEME OF NEED FOR AUSTERITY AND HONESTY BY OFFICIALS AND NATIONAL LEADERS HAS LONG BEEN EMPHASIZED BY PRESIDENT PAK. HOWEVER, HE HAS NEVER IMPLEMENTED POLICIES WITH CHANCE OF SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCING MOST FLAGRANT ABUSES BY THOSE IN POSITIONS OF POWER. DISINTEGRATION OF VIETNAMESE SOCIETY UNDER STRESS OF MASSIVE CORRUPTION MUST PRESENT PAK WITH DISTURBING EXAMPLE OF DIVISIVE EFFECT SUCH OBVIOUS ABUSES AND INEQUALITIES CAN HAVE. IT IS CLEAR THAT, FROM HIS POINT OF VIEW, CORRUPTION IS WEAKNESS RELATIVE TO THE NORTH WHICH IS AT LEAST AS SERIOUS AS POLITICAL DISSIDENCE, HIS DILEMMA IS THAT HE CANNOT ELIMINATE THESE ABUSES WITHOUT AT THE SAME TIME ELIMINATING MANY OF HIS STRONGEST SUPPORTERS.

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